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Title: Need to exempt gold jewellery worn by NRI travellers from customs.

SHRI JOSE K. MANI (KOTTAYAM): Kerala, devoid of natural resources mainly depends on remittances from abroad including inflow of funds in the form of bullion to sustain its economy. Foreign fund inflows to Kerala constitute around 35% of its GDP. The ill conceived levy of customs duty on gold, brought in as personal jewellery will have adverse impact on the fragile economy of Kerala as such an imposition of customs duty will deter NRIs returning from abroad to wear on person traditional gold/jewellery including the sacred rings and Mangala Sutra.

Most importantly, more than hurting the religious sentiments of the NRIs who associate deep reverence to personal jewellery regularly worn on person, this impost of customs duty on gold worn by NRIs returning from abroad, for which NRI travellers often face difficulty at the customs counter at the airports.

I would, therefore, urge the Government that in deference to the sentiments of NRIs deeply associated with adornment of personal jewellery and in the larger interest of the sustenance of Kerala's economy to consider restoration of the earlier regulations permitting the NRI travellers to wear gold jewellery in person to a limit defined in quantum, to neutralise the rise in gold prices as compared to the prices prevalent that time.

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